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**Montana Military Museum**

# Press Release

## **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Montana's 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment winning the Battle of Sanananda**

**The Montana 28<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed Senate Joint Resolution # 1 Recognizing Montana's Regiment for Sacrifices and first Win Against Japanese Land Forces**

**Fort William Henry Harrison, MT – January 22, 2013:**

January 24, 2013 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of end of the Battle of Sanananda, Papua New Guinea, in which Montana's Regiment, the 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 41<sup>st</sup> Division, was credited with inflicting the first defeat of Japanese land forces occupying New Guinea by Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelburger, the Commanding General of the Advance New Guinea Forces.

General Eichelburger in his letter to the officers and men of the 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, recognized their leadership and sacrifice in this important action. Eichelburger, stated, "As the Commanding General of the Advance New Guinea Forces may I extend my heartiest congratulations and deep gratitude for the part each of you played in inflicting upon the Japanese the first major land defeat they have suffered. Realizing the difficulties and almost insurmountable obstacles which faced you in the accomplishment of your mission it was with a great deal of pride that I reported to the Commander-in-Chief the important contribution of regiment to our momentous victory."

Gen. Eichelburger went on to say, "I deeply regret the loss of those who fell in combat and have the utmost sympathy for their families and friends in bereavement. To those of you who remain I offer my best wishes for continued success of your Regiment in battle. You and your unit have helped us to make history in the jungles of New Guinea." /s/ Robert Eichelburger, Lt. Gen. U.S. Army, Commanding.

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**For Release 12 noon. MST, January 23, 2013**

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The recognition didn't stop there for in a bi-partisan patriotic move, and only the second time in Montana's history, Montana's twenty-eight Legislative Assembly passed Senate Joint Resolution Number One on February 22, 1943, recognizing Montana's National Guard 163<sup>rd</sup> Regiment for their victories in the Battle for New Guinea.

In the Memorandum sent to New Guinea, Senate Joint Resolution No. 1, was quoted as follows, "SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1" "A JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE VICTORIES OF MONTANA INFANTRY REGIMENT, U.S.A., EXPRESSING THE GRATITUDE OF THE PEOPLE OF MONTANA TO THE REGIMENT AND PROVIDING A CABLE MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATURE TO THE REGIMENT IN THE COMBAT ZONE OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC THEATER OF WAR."

"WHEREAS, the official military reports emanating from General Douglas Mac Arthur's Headquarters in the South Pacific, as released by the War Department's and the news dispatches cabled by observers, make manifest that the 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry--Montana's own--has been of imperishable fame in the jungles and on the heights of New Guinea in most arduous combat against an implacable foe, and has from the very outbreak of hostilities demonstrated the finest attributes of the American soldier, in devotion to training, infraternization and cooperation with free peoples of the great Pacific world to the south, and in the deep resolve to establish the rule of law among the nations of the earth; and,

"The Sixth Legislative Assembly, of the State Of Montana, by Joint Senate Resolution No. 3, approved February 22, 1899, recognized the same valiant manhood displayed by the military predecessors of the present regiment, the First Montana Volunteer Infantry, which at that time had distinguished itself near the city of Manila in the Philippine Islands, and such Legislative Assembly, more than forty-three years ago, cabled to the Regiment an expression of the pride and gratitude of Montana's people; in the years in between, the Second Montana Infantry Regiment, immediate predecessor, furnished to the American Expeditionary Force in France, officers and men, who with our allies repulsed the savage hordes of the Prussian General staff, then and now intent on the enslavement of those who oppose the substitution of might for right, and brought back their Colors covered with streamers and ribbons of the great victories in France and Flanders; and,

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"Their successor, the present 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, has emblazoned anew the heroic traditions of the Regiment by annihilating a great Japanese Army on the Papuan Peninsula of New Guinea to win the first great land battle of the Japanese-American War; and has hereby again demonstrated the unconquerable resolution of Montana's free mountaineers; and

"Their heart of all the people of Montana, while vibrant with affection for the Regiment, are burdened with pain at its losses, and determined to repay the holy obligation resulting from their sacrifices, by solemnly assuming the responsibility of free men in support of the reign of law throughout the earth;

"NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the twenty-eight Legislative Assembly of the State of Montana, the House of Representative concurring, that the Legislative Assembly tenders to every officer and to every man of the 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment the deep gratitude's of the whole body of our citizens for the great victory which our men have won, Purchased with the blood of their bravest, hopeful that the Regiment will accept this expression as an evidence of the love and devotion which we have for it, and which sustains us on the home front and inspires us to dedicate each day to aid our men overseas.

"That we ask the Commanding Officer of the Regiment, when the Regiment is placed in his hands, to communicate the continuing homage of Montana people to General Douglas Mac Arthur, whose father, General Arthur MacArthur, led the Montana Regiment of 1899 to a victory that brought freedom to the Philippines who have proved their brotherhood with us and with whose help General Douglas MacArthur as his father's successor, and with the aid of our Regiment, will restore those peoples of thieves of the Pacific to the dignity of men.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following message be cabled at once, through military or other appropriate channels, to the Commander of the 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment in the combat zone.

"WITH VIBRANT ADMIRATION FOR YOUR MAGNIFICANT VICTORY OVER THE JAPANESE ON THE PAPUAN PENINSULA OF NEW GUINEA AND ELSEWHERE, WITH PRAYERS OF THE WOUNDED AND WITH UNDYING RESOLVE TO CARRY THE HIGH PURPOSE OF OUR NOBLE

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DEAD, THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE OF MONTANA ARE WITH YOU AS ONE EVERY HOUR OF EVERY DAY, THE TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MONTANA IN SESSION AT HELENA." /s/ Earnest T. Eaton, President of the Senate & /s/ Gee W. O'Conner, Speaker of the House.

The Measure was approved on March 5, 1943 by Sam C. Ford, Governor. The Resolution was transmitted by memorandum and telegram to the Regiment where it was distributed by the Adjutant of the 163<sup>rd</sup> by Captain James R. Kent, by order of the Regimental Commander, Colonel Jens Doe, Later the Commander of the 41<sup>st</sup> Division. In addition, a special commemorative personalized print of the Capital and the General Meagher Statue was presented to every member of the Regiment. This can be seen in the 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment display.

The 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Gallery is located at the Montana Military Museum, located at the Montana National Guard Training Center, Fort William Henry Harrison, on the West edge of Helena. Winter operating hours are Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m to 4 p.m. Other times by request.

If you have any questions please contact Raymond Read, Director of the Montana Military; Museum at 406-324-3550 or at 406-458-9847. E-mail address at the Museum is

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The U.S. Army Center of Military History recognizes the Montana Military Museum as an official Museum Activity. The Department of Military Affairs and the Montana Army and Air National Guard sponsors the Museum. The Museum's scope is Montana Military History from the Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery to the present War of Terrorism. Exhibits tell the rich history Montanans in military service in war and peace in all services. The Montana Military Museum is financially supported through the efforts of membership the Fort William Henry Harrison Museum, a Montana public corporation, recognized as a 501(c) (3) non-profit for purposes of public education. For more information write to P.O. box 125, Fort Harrison, Montana 59636-0125 or call 406-324-3550